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Spiritual Significance of Modern Socialism

John Spargo

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**The Spiritual Significance
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The Spiritual Significance of Modern Socialism

BY

JOHN SPARGO

AUTHOR OF "THE BITTER CRY OF THE CHILDREN," ETC.

**NEW YORK
B. W. HUEBSCH**

1911

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B. W. HUEBSCH

First printing, November, 1908

Second printing, February, 1909

Third printing, September, 1911

Jan. 4, 1912
Harvard University.
Dept. of Social Ethics.

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To
RUFUS W. WEEKS
"Justum et tenacem propositi virum"

FOREWORD

Many friends having asked me to publish the lecture on "The Spiritual Significance of Modern Socialism," which I delivered before the People's Institute, in Cooper Union, New York City, in the winter 1907-1908, and subsequently in many cities under the auspices of the Socialist Party and various religious bodies, I have enlarged it somewhat, while keeping closely to the form in which it was actually delivered, and send it forth in the hope that it may reach a wider audience and result in helping some of those who read it to a nobler and truer view of the Socialist movement with which I am proud to be identified.

J. S.

September, 1908.

I

IT is characteristic of all great men, such world-figures as Jesus, Savonarola, Luther, Lincoln, Marx, and many others in the unnumbered host of the truly great, that they may be approached and studied from many different viewpoints with peculiar justice and advantage. Indeed, it is perhaps the best test of greatness we have, this many-sidedness which compels criticism and appreciation from minds of varied temperaments and interests.

The life of a great man is like a diamond that is cut with many facets, from any one of which the beauty of the stone may be seen and appreciated. All the facets cannot be seen at once, just as no one vision of a great life comprehends all its sides. Take a hundred men, representing as many temperaments

and as many interests in life, and each of them will admit the greatness of Jesus, of Savonarola, of Luther, of Lincoln, or of Marx. But if you ask each to tell what seems to him to be the supreme quality in any one of these great characters, each will give, perhaps, a different answer. And there is no surer test of true greatness than that.

A great historical figure seen by men of varied temperaments and visions is like a landscape seen by different artists in varied conditions of light and atmosphere. One artist sees it in the gray mystic dawn, peopled with whispering phantoms, and so paints it. Another sees it gilded with the radiance of noon and filled with the song and joy of life. And as he sees it, so he tries to paint it. Yet another sees the same landscape at eventide, gorgeous with the glow of sunset and pervaded with solemnity, peace and rest. And he, too, paints the landscape as he sees it.

So there are three pictures of the same landscape, widely different in character. The pictures are different, but the landscape is the

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same. There are the same trees and the same rocks; it is the same valley, or the same plain. The physical elements of the landscape have not changed at all, but, according to his conditions, each artist has seen something which the others, in their conditions, could not see.

II

AS with men, so with movements. As with the individual, so with individuals in the mass. The same test can be successfully applied to any great historical event or to any of the great movements in history. Just as men who unanimously acclaim Jesus as the sublimest figure in history will do so for very different reasons, so men who regard Christianity as the greatest movement in the history of the world will differ greatly in their reasons for that estimate. So men will agree in proclaiming that the Protestant Reformation was a glorious movement for many widely diverse reasons. So it is with Wesley and Methodism; with Lincoln and the Emancipation of the Negro; with Marx and the Social Revolution.

Not least of the signs of the greatness of the modern Socialist movement, then, is the

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fact that it appeals with equal charm and force to men and women of many diverse points of view. It is, I think, the supreme glory of this great world-movement that so many temperaments and passions, so many qualities of mind and character, are attracted to it; each finding in it something that answers its own peculiar needs. The saying attributed to Jesus, "I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all men unto myself" has been cited many times as a proof of the sublime faith of Jesus. Likewise it may be said of this Socialist movement that its adherents have a sublime faith in the power of their ideal to draw and unite all men, regardless of race, color or creed.

To the wage-worker, engaged in a daily struggle for existence against the forces of capitalist society, Socialism signifies primarily a movement for his economic deliverance. It means security of employment. It means work that is worthy to be done and proper conditions for doing it, conditions which do not debase body or brain. It means freedom

from Want and the haunting fear of Want. It means a larger share of the Good in life and less of the Ill. It means, in a word, material gains in the form of better shelter, better clothes, better food — and these secured against assault. Socialism thus becomes to the wage-worker the political expression of that struggle of which his labor union is the economic expression. It is his means of expressing in the State the claims he is continually advancing in the workshop. His ballot and his strikes and boycotts are different expressions of the same great struggle.

Thus the wage-worker interprets Socialism in terms of economic gain. It is for him a philosophy which explains how and why others reap where he sows and take what he makes. It means to him a movement of the exploited to make exploitation impossible; to drive away, by their concerted action, the dreaded foe, Poverty, and to enthrone Plenty in its place. And his conception of Socialism is a perfectly just one. Socialism means all that.

But another man may have quite a different conception of Socialism. He is, perhaps a professor in one of the great universities. He has never known the pain and misery of want, or the fear of it. He has never had to engage in the daily struggle for better wages; never had to beg in vain for employment. All his life he has had an abundance of good food, good clothes, books, music and the comforts of home. He cannot understand, no matter how carefully and earnestly he tries by observation and reading, all that these material things mean to the wage-worker, and he may even marvel at the sordidness of the view which sees in Socialism only a movement for increasing material comforts.

But in his life he has experienced another kind of bondage than that which the wage-worker knows. He sees that under the present system there is a bondage of the intellect, and he is quick to resent it. He finds that he is not free to teach the truth as he sees it; that chains of class-interest and greed are laid upon the mind and that Truth is muzzled in the

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temple. He sees, what the wage-worker only vaguely suspects, that the fountains of knowledge are poisoned at their source by the sinister forces of class-interest. The world in which he lives and moves is blighted by capitalism, and he conceives Socialism as the great Liberator of the Mind. He turns to the Socialist movement as the force which alone can rend asunder the chains which hold the intellect in bondage. His faith in Socialism is not less intense than that of the wage-worker but it is motivated by a different impulse and passion. And his conception of Socialism is likewise a perfectly just one. Socialism means all that.

Yet another man approaches Socialism, from the religious approach. Cradled in religious faith and inspired by an intense enthusiasm, he adds to the ethical view of life a mystic and poetic interpretation of the universe and of his relation to the *cosmos*. In that mystic and poetic interpretation he finds the vitalizing force of all his ethical precepts, and he believes that without it they

would be barren and fruitless. It matters not for us, in the present discussion, whether this be right or no: it is enough that we understand his point of view.

Such a man sees that the religious life is impossible under capitalism. Everywhere, at every turn, the spirit of capitalism kills Religion. He tries valiantly to live up to the great ethical precepts which constitute the heart of his religious inspiration, but he is constantly baffled and repelled. In the maelstrom of capitalist society he is tossed about as a cork is tossed about by tempestuous seas. Brotherhood in any real sense is impossible under capitalism. Life is all bound down to its ledger accounts of profit and loss. To live the Golden Rule is impossible. There is no individual salvation from social evils.

Nothing in life is more pathetic, more harrowing to the soul, than the helplessness of the individual in modern society. No matter how religious a man may be, when he sits down to his breakfast, drawn by the vast and intricate machinery of commerce from all

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parts of the globe, can he tell under what conditions it has all been produced — the ultimate price in human suffering which has had to be paid, and by whom it was paid? So with his clothing and all the multitude of things which minister to his comfort and life. In society we are so inextricably bound up together that there can be no salvation for any man by himself; no religious life for the individual until it is possible for all. Seeing these things, seeing that under capitalism the ethical heart of religion dies and faith degenerates into a cold, barren, futile creed of formulas for vain and fruitless sermons, many a religious enthusiast turns to Socialism and finds in its teachings inspiration, solace and hope. To such a believer Socialism appears as a great, vital and vitalizing religious principle. And that conception of Socialism is as legitimate and just as any.

The man who, because his life is torn by the economic struggle, sees in Socialism economic redemption, is right; the man who, because his soul rebels at the bondage of the

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mind, sees in Socialism mental and intellectual freedom, is right; and the man who, because his religious faith withers under the blight of capitalism, sees in Socialism the force which will make the religious life possible, is right. Each point of view is legitimate and all are necessary to a full comprehension of Socialism. And there are still other points of view — the point of view of Woman, for example, seeing in Socialism the breakdown of the last remnants of her servitude and the triumph of Sex Equality; or of the Artist, seeing the source of ugliness in the spirit of greed which pervades capitalism, and looking to Socialism as the only hope for the Life Beautiful.

III

SO I make no apology for thus directing attention to the *spiritual* significance of Socialism, for approaching the movement from its much neglected spiritual side. I am not unmindful of the fact that it is an unusual interpretation of Marxian Socialism; that many very earnest Socialists will be among the first to repudiate the suggestion that their movement has a spiritual significance and may be interpreted in terms of spirituality. Just as the man whose main concern is intellectual freedom cannot understand the viewpoint of the wage-earner, which seems to him crassly materialistic and sordid, so the wage-earner, whose concern is economic freedom, cannot always understand the viewpoint of the man who approaches Socialism from the spiritual side and is apt to regard it as pretty but futile sentimentalism.

I know perfectly well that there are many Socialists who make this mistake and who regard every interpretation of Socialism other than the purely economic with distrust and derision. They conceive of Socialism as a matter of economics simply; deny all ideals and boast of their selfishness. Often, by a strange perversity, they make their creed narrow and forbidding, repelling many who would otherwise be disposed to join them. Often I have heard these good comrades of mine full of zeal and enthusiasm preaching a Socialism which repelled instead of attracting me, robbing the Socialism we equally believed in of all its splendor and majestic inspiration. But I have understood and complained not.

I have understood how infinitely superior to their creed were these apostles of Socialism who insisted in robbing it of its matchless spiritual appeal, for have I not worked with them in close comradeship, fought by their side in the bitter struggle and been inspired by the nobility of their lives? Of all the noble and generous influences which have come into my

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life the noblest and sweetest have come from these same comrades, from their heroic and unselfish devotion to a glorious ideal. I know that they are idealists; that they spend their lives in the quest of the Holy Grail. I know that they have seen the vision of a gladsome world and that they have given their lives to its realization. I know that the world-brotherhood which inspired the greatest of the Prophets inspires them. I know that they have given their lives —

To build on Earth the Vision hung in air—
the vision of a world throbbing with what
Whitman calls “the dear love of Comrades.”
And I know, too, that —

This is the Vision that the prophets saw —
The Comrade Kingdom builded in their dream.

Sometimes I have ventured upon a test of my impressions. I recall the incident of one of the most conspicuous exponents of this type and his Confession. He had been boasting of his “selfishness,” though every one of

his comrades knew that he had literally given his life for the Cause; he had been scoffing at ideals and appeals to anything except the physical nature of mankind, though we who were his comrades knew well that his whole life was vibrant with a passionate ideal, that his heart was set aflame by the sight of human suffering and that the cry of a babe stirred his soul to its depths. He was constantly impoverishing himself to help those less fortunate than he was, yet he boasted of his selfishness. He seemed to have hidden his real nature behind a ghastly creed, and when he did a noble and generous act he seemed to be ashamed of it, much as other men would be ashamed of a base and cruel act. The most fitting answer to his harsh and repelling words was his gentle and generous life.

I asked him: "Comrade, if you really believe the things you say—that immediate material interests alone can be appealed to—what makes you freely spend your life in the Socialist movement? What is it that you per-

sonally hope to gain?" And his reply was: "I shall not live to enjoy the harvest, but my children and my children's children will inherit the Co-operative Commonwealth."

So at once there was a confession that he was giving his life for others than himself. Then I listened while he set forth that, of course, he was seeking not his *personal* interest, but that of his *class*, the toilers, producers of the world's comfort and goods. Here was an immense expansion of interest, from "mine" to "our," from self to class. In his class my comrade included workers of all lands, of all races, of all colors and all creeds, brain workers as well as hand workers. So that a man or woman rendered useful service to society, he or she belonged to his class.

But what of the other class, the masters of the world, masters of jobs and of bread? Was it intended that these should be overthrown by the brute might of the workers, through sheer force of numbers, and then ruled as they had ruled? Were the two

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classes to change places, the downmost class of to-day becoming the uppermost class to-morrow, and the Social Revolution to be a gigantic and terrible retribution? For answer, my comrade read a well-known passage from Engels's *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, to the effect that with the triumph of the working-class the class division of society, with its attendant class rule, would be ended forever. / Socialism aims not to enthrone one class in place of another, but to do away with class rule altogether. Thus the much mis-
understood "Class Struggle" is essentially a spiritual struggle. /

"Of course," said my comrade who had been boasting of his narrow and selfish creed, "Socialism will be a good thing for all — for the men who rule not less than for those who are ruled. It will destroy the servitude of riches as well as the servitude of poverty. Under capitalism, society rots at both ends — the poor from their poverty and the rich from surfeit. As I see it, Socialism will be a good

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thing for all. Ultimately that must be so, for Socialism means Brotherhood, and *that* cannot be bad for anybody."

I have never known a Socialist, no matter how narrow and sordid his verbal interpretation might be, who did not take that position: whose Socialism was, in its last and deepest analysis, anything less than a profound faith in the Brotherhood of Man. And I make the claim with confidence that, not only is a spiritual interpretation of Socialism possible, but it is also essential to a proper understanding of it. The Spirit of Socialism cries out:—

I am Religion and the church I build,
Stands on the sacred flesh with passion packed;
In me the ancient gospels are fulfilled —
In me the symbol rises into Fact.

IV.

THINK you that I claim too much for this great movement of the masses, this march of protesting proletarians whose loud cry makes kings and emperors tremble and whose tread shakes palaces and thrones? Do you think that rhetorical passion has swept me on out of my depths that I make this claim for the Socialist movement, for these armies of protesting, striking, ballotting workers with red banners? Nay. I have chosen every word in that claim with calm deliberation; weighed each word and examined it in the light of conscience and reason.

In justification of the claim I point to the movement itself. Here we have the greatest political movement in history, embracing men and women of all the nations of the earth, of all colors and all creeds. At the very threshold, we are confronted by the fact that

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there is in this international movement a power of appeal strong enough to overcome all the barriers and distinctions of race, of sex, of speech, of tradition and of belief, uniting all in one vast aim and kindling in the hearts of all its adherents one sublime enthusiasm for freedom and brotherhood.

In the past races have been born to a heritage of hatred, race hating race and nation hating nation. Even the religions of the world have not united mankind. Christians have persecuted and butchered Jews; Protestants and Catholics have vied with each other in the bitterness of their hatred. Over the pages of the history of civilization rests the scarlet shadow of man's hate for man born out of cruel perversions of the religious instinct. Visions of bloody battlefields, vast acreages of bleached human bones, gibbet and rack and thumbscrew, flames from funeral pyres leaping in mad fury around the writhing forms of "unbelievers," brutal and dehumanized mobs filled with worse than brute passion — such visions rise out of the pages

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of history, terrible witnesses of the failure of organized religion to bind the nations of the earth together. This I say with no desire to attack organized religion, or to disparage it, but with reluctant spirit.

Never before in all the centuries were so many millions of people of diverse races and religions, born to such widely varied traditions and environments, united in one great movement. From the crowded tenements of New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco to those of London, Paris, Berlin, Rome and St. Petersburg; from the slums of Boston, Philadelphia, New York and other American cities, to the slums of Melbourne and Sydney, Calcutta and Bombay, Tokyo and Peking, Cape Town and Johannesburg, Socialism draws its recruits. It draws them, also, from the little New England farms and the great farms of the prairies; from the coal mines of the Alleghenies and the metalliferous mines of the Rockies; from the vineyards of Italy and France; from the Russian "Pale" and the German workshop; from the Japanese mili-

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tary barracks and the Chinese school; from the African diamond mine to the little store in an English country village. In a word, wherever men and women are toiling for the leisure of others, and wherever poverty and misery lurk, the Socialist movement presents itself.

If that were all — if uniting into one great movement all these strange elements of humanity, subduing all racial and religious hatred and distrust, were the only achievement of the Socialist movement, I should confidently assert its claim to be counted among the greatest spiritual forces of the world. Think of the world's more than eight million Socialist voters voting their declaration that equality of opportunity must take the place of our system of privileges and handicaps; that economic justice alone will satisfy them, because that is the only basis upon which the divine fabric of human brotherhood can be raised! Blind to the most obvious facts in our social life must he be who fails to see that this international movement of the workers

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is in its ultimate and profoundest meaning a spiritual expression. Fifty years ago Carlyle perceived the coming of the new spiritual passion. "An unspeakable religion is struggling to speak itself," he said. In the Socialist movement the unspeakable has become speakable: it speaks through political programmes and conscience-directed ballots; through armies marching under scarlet banners.

Not only by reason of the fact that it unites mankind in a glorious brotherhood is Socialism to be regarded as a spiritual force in modern life, but by reason of the faith which is the secret of its power to unite men as nothing else in the whole stretch of the centuries has done. Great and wonderful as the result is, the impelling cause is, from a spiritual viewpoint, yet infinitely greater. In an age of unfaith, these Socialists, despised, reviled, hated and feared as they are, have a matchless faith in mankind and the future of mankind. To the prophetic visions of "peace and goodwill," of days to be when swords and

spears shall be broken into plowshares and pruning hooks, the Socialist to-day answers with heartfelt "I believe!"

I remember that many years ago a brave clergyman, named Hancock, preached in St. Paul's cathedral, London, a sermon entitled "The Banner of Christ in the Hands of the Socialists." His audacity — for so it was counted — shocked many an English Christian. How could it be possible for Socialists to carry the banner of Christ? Yet I venture to say that if by the "banner" of Christ we mean the great principles of Righteousness and Brotherhood which he advocated, the Socialists are the only people in the world to-day who, as an organized body, are striving to incorporate them into the social system and the political life of the nations of the world.

With notable exceptions, the churches give them only a half-hearted assent. They accept them — as beautiful, but unattainable, ideals. As texts for platitudinous and ineffectual sermons they accept the ethical pre-

cepts of Jesus and his predecessors, the older Hebrew prophets, but not in a vital sense as laws of life. Infidelity on the part of his followers to the essential principles of Christ's teaching raised Dogma in the churches to a position of pre-eminence over Religion. Except in those churches where the leaven of social unrest has been working, I know of no place where the vital teachings of Jesus are more persistently discounted than in the temples where his name is oftenest heard.

From time to time there are outcries concerning the hostile attitude of progressive workers to Christianity, but there is indeed no such hostility. Socialist and other agitators hurl thunderbolts of superbly passionate invective against *Churchianity*, against what they feel to be an organized masquerade, but there is ever reverence and love for Jesus. They resent the perversion of his teaching by the churches and cherish in their hearts the pictures of the New Testament in which Christ's humanity is portrayed. They think of the homeless proletarian, less fortunate

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than the foxes and the birds, with no resting place for his weary head. They think of the Compassionate Christ, too big in his humanity to judge the woman at the well; tender in his love for the little children; withering in his scorn and contempt for an unfaithful and corrupt priesthood; sublime in his denunciation of an empty creedal caricature of religion; heroic and majestic in his anger at Mammon's desecration of the temple. This Christ, the Christ of the Gospels, they revere as a great comrade.

The contempt for organized Christianity, the withering scorn heaped upon it by impassioned Socialists, is by no means a new phenomenon. The glory of the prophetic literature of the Bible is the ever recurring rebuke to an unfaithful priesthood. No modern Socialist agitator has equalled Hosea in denunciation of priestly infidelity. Micah's assault upon priests that teach for money, Zephaniah's cry of Woe to the priests that "have profaned the sanctuary" and Malachi's terrible impeachment of the priests, making them

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“ contemptible and base before all the people ” are echoed in these days by Socialists and other radical thinkers. Let those who are shocked by the bitter invective of the modern prophets of social revolt against *Churchianity* remember that, like the earlier prophets, Jesus himself spared not the priests and elders. “ The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you ! ” he declared. How often do we read that the chief priests and elders took counsel how to destroy him ! Nothing could be further from the truth than to regard criticism and denunciation of organized Christianity as an attack upon the teachings of Jesus. Prof. Shailer Mathews is well within the limits of conservatism when he declares that “ there is many a church which, in point of general altruism and of loyalty to its professions of high purpose, could not endure a comparison with the work of some labor unions.”

The passionate protest of the agitators against organized Christianity is significant chiefly because it articulates the dumb protest

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of the masses. The agitator is always the prophet of dumb masses. The common people heard Jesus gladly because he was their spokesman, their voice. The Christian church has been arraigned at the bar of the conscience and intelligence of the masses; weighed in the balances and found wanting. The average workingman feels in his dumb struggle what Theodore Parker felt when he declared that if Christ could return to earth he would have to fight Christianity. He feels that the Church is generally a servitor of privilege and oppression, that it stands as a bulwark against Justice. It was that cynical hater of democracy and liberty, the English Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, leader of those assailed by Daniel O'Connell as "base, brutal and bloody Whigs," who declared that the Church was the world's last bulwark against Christianity and should therefore be left alone.

The dream of universal peace, faith in the coming of a time when wars should cease, came not from the priesthood but from the

prophets. In all ages the organization of the forces of religion has tended to narrow the religious concept. And in all ages the prophets, either from within or without the Church — but oftenest from without — have struggled to correct the tendency, denouncing the priests for their reactionary influence and their lack of faith, and holding up the wider ideal to the world. Not the priests, but the prophets, in ancient Israel held up the glorious ideal of a world redeemed from the curse of War and given to the reign of Peace.

And in our time the greatest force for the consummation of that ideal common to all the great religions of the world is centered in a movement which is outside of synagogues, temples and churches. For blind indeed must one be to the tendencies of the time who does not realize that the international Socialist movement is the greatest force in the world to-day making for universal peace among the nations of the earth. Let there be some misunderstanding between two nations concerning some question of trade, some regulation

of markets, jingoism at once becomes rampant in the pulpits. As soon as the governments declare war, in almost all the churches of Christendom, jingo-patriotism takes the place of faith in human brotherhood and love of peace.

Peace congresses between nations mark a big step onward in the evolution of mankind to a higher ethical state. But the really effective peace congresses, out of which proceed invincible faith in the peace ideal, spring from and represent not governments but peoples. The great Peace Congress at The Hague, occupied in formulating a multitude of rules for the regulation of warfare, intended to be for international wars what the Marquis of Queensbury's rules are for pugilistic fights, was far less significant, and far less potent for peace, than the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart. Said the representatives of the governments of the world with unblushing cynicism: "Though we meet as a Peace Congress, it is perfectly idle to think that war can be done away with. It is use-

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less to talk of disarmament, or even of the limitation of armaments. All we can do is to provide a code of rules for the regulation of the great game of war." On the other hand, the representatives of the workers, in their International Socialist Congress, not only declared unequivocally against all war, but also pledged themselves to the promotion of such a feeling of solidarity among the workers of the world as would make war an impossibility — except small armies of the ruling class should decide to fight their own battles. And this last is, of course, unthinkable. It is, indeed, the Socialist who is entitled to repeat Tennyson's prophetic lines:—

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could
see;
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder
that would be;
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the
battle flags were furled
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the
World.

V

✓ **B**Y reason of the fact that it unites peoples so diverse into one great fraternal movement, and by reason of the profound faith in human brotherhood which makes that possible and tends to promote universal peace, the Socialist movement of to-day must be looked upon as a spiritual factor of profound significance in our modern life. But these, great as they are, are by no means the only spiritual factors in modern Socialism. Equally as vital as the wonderful manner in which it draws the "ocean sundered fibers" of humanity together, and the manner in which it makes for peace among the nations, is the hope and inspiration it brings to the lives of its adherents. I know of no satisfying, inspiring and ennobling hope for the life that is other than that which belongs to Socialism. In an age of pessimism and unfaith, So-

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cialism is the only hope and anchorage for millions of souls.

There are plentiful signs of progress in the world around us. Man is forever enlarging his kingdom in the universe, reclaiming vast areas out of the Unknown and adding them to his ever-increasing empire. He has enlarged his kingdom into realms far beyond the flight of the most fertile imaginations of the ages. He has gone down into the caverns of earth and torn from the bosom of Nature gold and gems with which to deck his queens, and from her hot heart secrets of infinitely greater value than these. He has narrowed the bounds of infinity and dared to make a pathway of the skies. He has made angry seas his servants, bearers of his mightiest burdens from shores to shores. He has harnessed the winds to his wheels of labor and caught and tamed the lightning's flash, making it his messenger. Man's kingdom in the universe is a wonderful achievement of the æons of evolution.

Compare this kingdom of Man in the

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twentieth century with that of his primitive ancestor, the cave dweller. What a marvellous change there is! The cave man, armed only with club or stone; compelled to compete with the beasts of the forest; terrified by the lightning's flash; helpless against fire and flood, pestilence and famine; the ocean a terror and the sky a mystery, was only barely removed from the ape in power. He was only master of the ape's world.

With such a glorious record of achievement to inspire mankind there ought to be no lack of faith in the world, no lack of joy. With such a kingdom Man ought to be happy. But, alas! this is an age of pessimism and unfaith. I am no alarmist and my spirit is inclined to err in the direction of optimism rather than in the direction of pessimism, but I confess that the crass materialism of the age, with its absence of inspiring and uplifting ideals, oppresses my heart. Where to-day are the dreamers of dreams setting the hearts of men aflame with holy enthusiasm, setting the feet of the young men and maidens marching to-

ward the vision? Where is there faith in mankind, faith in the future of the race, in the capacity of mankind to rise higher and higher, to complete the chain of evolution from brute to brother?

Only in the Socialist movement does this faith abound, only in the Socialist movement do we find the stirrings of the heart caused by the dream of a revived world. The churches have, for the most part, lost all their social ideals and their faith. Here and there a voice is raised in affirmation — may these few voices prove to be the leaven of the whole movement! The Socialist dreams and believes, but Mammon and the Church mock the dream and the faith.

There is nothing more pathetic than the helplessness of the churches which the spirit of Socialism has not touched with its fire, kindling the flames of social faith upon the altars. They complain that the workers do not attend the services of the church and lament the fact that they have no longer the power to win the masses. Most of them

seek the reason in all directions except that of their own lack of faith. They do not realize that the average church to-day is little more than the tomb of what once was a splendid faith — and men do not seek life in the tombs. Instinctively, where they have not consciously fathomed the truth, the masses feel that anything worthy the name of spiritual feeling and experience is impossible in the vast majority of the churches.

The causes of this condition of affairs are not difficult to discover. For centuries Dogma held the place of Religion in the churches. Dogma upon dogma encrusted the great ethical ideals, the soul of religion. The simple ethical teachings of Jesus were lost sight of, buried in a mass of theological *débris*. In place of an ideal of social justice there were speculations of no importance in life raised far above the vital teachings of Jesus. How many Angels might dance upon the point of a needle? As if the abstruse question behind that mattered to a living soul!

Dogma, then, usurped the place of Reli-

gion. More importance was attached to fantastic beliefs than to right living. A monster of iniquity who accepted the formulas prescribed by the Church was counted a better Christian than the just and merciful man whose intellect could not grasp the priest-made creed. Such a monster, for example, was Phillip II of Spain. Ferocious, blood-thirsty and inhuman vampire that he was, Phillip was guilty of every crime at which men shudder, all in the name of his "faith." Axe and faggot slew more than forty thousand persons in ten years at his behest, simply because they could not believe in the terrible monster Phillip worshiped as God. In all his life there was not a single redeeming feature; not a touch of humanity relieves the awful record of his ferocious blood-lust, yet he was honored as a Saint!

The case of the bloodthirsty monkish king of Spain simply illustrates a principle which for centuries ruled all the Christian Church, and which is still rampant in thousands of our churches. *Creed* has been and still is

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to a regrettable extent, evaluated as being of more importance than *deed*. Jesus had no creed, no theology of any kind; but most of his professed disciples through the centuries have held creedal belief to be more important than ethical living. Even to-day, in every city, it is well known that among the prominent "Christians" will be found many of the worst exploiters of labor; owners of man-killing tenements; corrupters of legislatures; leaders of political "machines" that traffic in votes and draw tribute from gambling hells and brothels. And this condition of affairs arises from the fact that formulas and creeds have supplanted the ethical precepts of Jesus in organized Christianity.

Happily, there is observable a healthy reaction from this. There is a very strong current of tendency in the Church toward the ethical teaching of Jesus. There is deep-seated unrest in the churches: men are turning away from dogmas to the principles of social righteousness and justice which Jesus taught as the great prophets, Isaiah, Amos,

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Joel, Ezekiel, Micah, and the rest, had done before him. Socialism is reaching the Synagogue and the Church with its challenge. The Roman Catholic Church, it is true, has up to the present largely withstood the Socialist advance in America, but even it is not immune. Loyal Catholics are preaching Socialism in lecture halls and on the street corners. Judaism and Protestantism are permeated with the Socialist spirit. We are in the midst of a great spiritual reformation unmatched in the history of the world. Faith in man, faith in his power to rise, to realize his noblest aspirations and dreams, is the dominant spiritual impulse of this world-circling movement.

VI

HOW much this means to our American life cannot be readily estimated. Certain it is that over-estimation of its importance is almost impossible and unthinkable. It means nothing less than the redemption of our national life from crass and soul-destroying materialism. It means the birth of a nation's soul.

In spite of all our much vaunted progress, if we except the strivings of the Socialists, the spiritual note is almost wholly lacking in our national life. Everywhere there is crass materialism, an absence of ideals of social justice and righteousness. The dollar standard rules everywhere. We boast loudly enough about our material wealth, but we are careless of those purple fountains of wealth, the blood of human beings. An assault upon any of our markets anywhere is quickly repelled, but

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not so an assault upon the lives of human beings. The dollar still holds a higher place than man in our social economy.

Infinitely precious, therefore, is this challenge to our national brain and conscience which the Socialist brings. With unwavering courage and eloquence fired with the elemental passion for liberty, the Socialists are incessantly demanding that human beings be placed above dollars in our social reckonings. Echoing Isaiah's exhortation, the modern Socialist agitator is forever crying, "Come, let us reason together! Let us take stock of our national life! Are our possessions worth the price we pay for them? Is Mammon a good paymaster?" The challenge of Jesus to the individual our Socialist agitator hurls at the nation: What doth it profit a nation if it gains the whole world but loses its own soul?

Granted the glory of "our far-flung battle-line," do we seek to pay for it by robbing childhood's cheeks of their bloom and joy? Granted the impressiveness of the tables of exports and imports with their "balance of

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trade" gains, are we sure that all the cost is counted, all the cries and tears, all the wrecked hopes and damned souls? Granted the splendor of the palaces of our millionaires and the cathedrals in which they worship, can we be indifferent to the number of human lives paid for them? Is it of no moment to us that for the splendor of the palace we must endure the squalor of a thousand noisome, body and soul-destroying hovels; that for the grandeur of the cathedral we must endure the shame of the brothel and the reproach of the harlot?

Well for America is it that this challenge is being voiced in unmistakable tones by the ever growing Socialist movement. Even though the New Jerusalem of the Socialist faith be never reached, its vision of a Co-operative Commonwealth prove to be an illusion, a deceptive mirage in the clouds, the value of its challenge must remain incalculably great. With marvelous enthusiasm and consecration it keeps burning into the social consciousness the fact that religion is a matter

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of human relations; that statesmanship and civic patriotism are not less religious than priesthood. A religion which does not express itself in fraternal social relations is not a religion at all but a mocking masquerade. A church which does not stand out against a social economy which compels the many to toil wearily and live sadly in order that the few may live vain and empty lives is not a religious institution. Such a church is irreligious, anti-religious, in the true meaning of those terms. The Christian who does not feel the poverty of our cities to be a reproach to society, the hunger of mothers and babes to be a sinful and shameful thing, the toil of little children to the end that palaces may be built for human drones to be as unholy as the crucifixion of Jesus itself, is far more in need of the service of some true Christian missionary than any poor "heathen" in Africa or elsewhere. To be a good Christian and a bad citizen at the same time is impossible. To be a good citizen without seeking to remove bad social conditions is impossible.

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Modern Socialism is tracing in letters of fire against the sky the world's protest against a religion which means less than justice and righteousness.

The challenge of Socialism to society is not based upon theories born of beautiful but vain dreams. Back of it is an indictment resting upon the hard facts of every day life. Facts with which we are all more than familiar enough, so that they have ceased to impress us are given a new and tragic significance when vitalized by the passion and faith of the Socialist. The genius of this great movement points to scenes which have never impressed us before and they become at once intolerable and unforgettable, haunting us and taunting us like so many infernal specters. Dull, heavy columns of figures out of government reports and statistical charts become inspired symbols, vibrant with the same human protest. The Socialist propaganda is one of intense realism, depending for its power and success upon the common facts of life.

With this equipment of stern facts the

Spirit of Socialism stands challenging the preacher in the pulpit and the worshiper in the pew; the statesman in the senate chamber and the voter at the ballot box; the bread-master in his pride and the bread-slave in his humility. With remorseless logic and torrential eloquence its challenge comes: "See you not the thousands of babies who perish needlessly each year — babies whose mothers bore them in peril and agony? See you not that they are slain by dank, murderous tenements or by foul milk, and that these are nothing less than the implements of the monster Profit? See you not the vast wastes of intellectual and moral genius, the stunting of child bodies and minds; or the agony of children bound to wheels or crushed by burdens too heavy for their young shoulders? Do you not see how mothers are torn from the cradle-sides and denied the right to be true mothers to their offspring in order that they may become profit-makers? Do you not see how by a cruel perversity poverty exists side by side with plenty, and because of it,

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so that men, women and children pine for lack of the very things which nature and human toil have produced superabundantly? And, seeing these things, and the worse, unutterable, things, what are you going to do?"

The preacher cannot escape that challenge nor stop his ears to it. Sooner or later, the answer must be given and every pulpit take sides in the great struggle which our unjust and miserable conditions produce. The pew must answer the challenge, for the day is already dawning when church and synagogue must decide openly and before all men to stand with Humanity against Mammon or with Mammon against Humanity. The statesman and the voter must answer the challenge, for around it must center the whole political life of our country until the challenge has been disposed of. Finally, the bread-master and the bread-slave must answer. The self-interests of these classes will doubtless decide that the masters of bread will cry for a policy of *laissez faire* — the ages-old cry of tyrants, "Let us alone!" — and that the slaves of

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bread will cry for change, for revolution, for justice. And upon that answer will rest the issue of the struggle. When the slaves of bread rise the pillars of the house of oppression will fall. When the slaves answer the challenge of Socialism with a united war cry for justice and economic freedom, all who resist them will be swept away as chaff before the fury of the gale. And that, I believe, will be the result. The despoiled and disinherited, urged by the mighty passion of Socialism, will rise and enter into full possession of their own, hurling into the dust of oblivion false and unjust religions, statecrafts and political economies.—

Dawnwards we tramp, towards the day and light.
On, on and up, the Army of the Night!

VII

THE faith of the Socialist in the ultimate triumph of his cause is invincible. He believes it to be inevitable; that the stars in their courses fight for Socialism. Nothing can shake this faith that the future belongs to Socialism, and the faith receives strange support from the fears of those who are most able and consistent in their opposition to Socialism. The most vigorous opponents of the movement are often as certain of its inevitable triumph as its most ardent believers. Herbert Spencer typifies this class. Opposing Socialism for many years with all the force of his magnificent intellect and fine courage, he declared not long before his death "Socialism will triumph inevitably, in spite of all opposition," adding that its establishment will be "the greatest disaster

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which the world has ever known." Anything more glorious than the faith of the Socialist or more terrible than the pessimistic fear of the great philosopher it would be difficult to imagine.

There are many very thoughtful and earnest men and women, belonging to neither of these classes, whose fears keep them aloof from the Socialist movement, though they recognize the justice of its indictment of present society and the spiritual exaltation of its ideal of a revived world. They fear that in its practical application the golden ideal will be transmuted to a dull, leaden reality. They fear above all that for the sake of the realization of an abstract equality a new bondage will be created; that fetters will be laid upon exceptional individuals to prevent them from rising above the common level. The "dull level of life," bringing the strongest to the level of the weakest, is what they most fear. It was De Tocqueville who said that the supreme test of democracy would be its power to give unlimited scope to genius

and exceptional individual endowments of intellect and character. As the complete expression of democracy, Socialism must meet this test successfully or be judged a failure. Equality that is attained by binding the swift and strong to the slow and weak is not life but death, not liberty but servitude.

It is unfortunate that Socialism is commonly conceived of as the antithesis of individualism; that its aim and programme are supposed to be directed toward a leveling down process, toward a uniformity of development possible only through the repression of exceptional talent and enterprise. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that modern Socialism does not aim at, nor hope for, equality and uniformity. Its ideal is not a great level plain of comfort, but a free, unhampered social life expressing every variation of culture and genius; not a world of mediocre equality but of glorious inequality such as only true equality of opportunity can ever make possible. The only equality aimed at by the Socialist is equality of right, equality of opportunity,

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out of which will develop a diversity of genius and attainment undreamed of as yet.

To state the matter more plainly, let us take a concrete illustration: Here are two babies, just born into the world, and the Spirit of Socialism broods over them with wistful tenderness, claiming each tiny seedling of humanity as its own. The mysterious and inscrutable little eyes give no hint of the future upon which they look; no hint of the germinal genius enfolded in each tender brain. The Spirit of Socialism does not seek to discover some process by which both can be forced to develop alike, so that each shall be a perfect copy of the other. It does not long for the power to kill the variant characteristics fashioned by Nature in the mothers' wombs out of the stored experience of the centuries. On the contrary, it seeks to make possible the complete unfolding of each life; to make it possible for each human bud to attain a full and perfect blossoming. In a word, it seeks for each equal opportunities to grow and develop. In life's garden it would

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give equal care to every human seedling. From the moment of birth it would give equal opportunities to all. Aye, and before birth, in the long night of preparation in the mother's womb, in the development of the father's loins and the mother's breasts, it would begin each child's heritage of equal opportunity.

Given such equality as this there would be no need to fear that life would become a dull plain of mediocrity. There would be no danger of a famine of genius. Not every one would be a poet any more than at present, but no "mute, inglorious Miltons" would perish in silent misery, no splendid poem die unborn in the dark prisons of poverty and despair. Not every one would be a painter of inspiring pictures any more than at present, but no dream of beauty would go unexpressed because the torturous pain of poverty drove the dreamer to Lethean silence and forgetfulness.

Could we but see it and reckon it, the most terrible cost of our present system is its waste

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of precious genius. Poems as great as any ever written, pictures as glorious as any ever painted, dramas as stirring as any ever produced, songs as inspiring as any ever sung, discoveries and inventions as wonderful and important as any ever made, have been lost to the world because it failed to provide genius with the conditions necessary for its growth. It is to-day, under the rule of capitalism, that life is a dull level. Here and there, immense distances apart, are towering mountain peaks of intellect, genius and character, but the rest is a dreary plain of mediocrity. If the future promised nothing better, one would pray with Browning:—

Make no more giants, God
But elevate the race at once!

It is to-day that for the great mass of humanity anything like individuality is impossible. Where is the individuality of the wage-workers, for example? Not one in a million is free to put into the work which consumes most of his life any trace of his

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own feeling or desire. No modern artificer can carve into his daily work anything of the dream which his heart may hold. If a carpenter, he dare not think of his work as a joy, as an opportunity to express himself in beautiful workmanship. If a factory worker, he dare not take his conscience with him into the factory and regard his task as a sacrament after the manner of the old craftsmen to whom *laborare est orare* was a vital truth. To take conscience and reverence for one's work into the average workshop would be equivalent to going with hands tied behind one's back!

The workman making shoddy clothing, building ugly and poor tenements for human beings to dwell in, or making debased and dishonest commodities of any kind, is not only robbed of wealth that is computable in terms of dollars, but also of that priceless wealth which springs from the invisible spiritual sources of life. To free the wage-worker from economic exploitation is indeed the primary object, the immediate aim, of Socialism,

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but it is not the sole object. It is not the end, but the means to an end that is far higher, the liberation of the soul. Labor, like another Prometheus, is bound to the rock of private profit and greed, and Socialism comes as the mighty Hercules to cut the cords and break the chains that bind the soul of man, setting it free for its upward and Godward flight. Mazzini used to declare that whoever could spiritualize democracy would save the world. But no one can spiritualize democracy for the simple reason that democracy is essentially spiritual; no one can make it a religion by bringing something to it, for the simple reason that it *is* religion. Democracy is the motor-power which makes for brotherhood, the grand passion of all religions.

VIII

NEXT to the fear of an intention to level mankind by some law of iron equality, the fear that it contemplates an attack upon the monogamic family operates to keep many persons from joining the Socialist movement. The vitality of this hoary libel is remarkable. Refuted thousands of times, it still appears in every attack upon Socialism. In spite of protests, denials, explanations and programmes there are still many persons who honestly and sincerely believe that Socialism aims at doing away with the family and turning over all its functions to the State. They conceive the aim of Socialism to be the creation of a great bureaucracy, a government machine controlling all human relations. They picture the Socialist State in their imaginations as one in which the government owns everything and controls every act of

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life, forcing everything to fit into its elaborate scheme of social organization.

It is impossible to deny that a certain amount of historical justification for this view exists. The word "Socialism" was originally applied to a variety of schemes for the regeneration of human society, some of them very beautiful and all of them very ingenious. They were the products of such yearnings as those of Omar the Pagan:—

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

The inventors of these social schemes literally sought to shatter the "sorry Scheme of Things" to bits and then to mould it anew according to the Heart's Desire.

These schemes for the realization of the universal dream of social harmony and peace bore a distinct likeness to, and were frequently based upon, such Utopian visions as Plato's *Republic* and More's *Utopia*. Their authors

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were architects of dream palaces for an ideal humanity. It is easy to understand how the word Socialism, when it came into use some seventy-five years ago in connection with the communistic schemes of Robert Owen, soon became the accepted generic title of all social experiments of a communistic nature. The term was applied indiscriminately to Plato's dream-world with its "community of wives," to the sex-communism of the Adamites of Germany, the "community marriage" of the Perfectionists of Oneida, the celibacy of Harmonists and Shakers, and the polygamy of the Mormons, because communism of goods, which was the central feature of Owen's schemes, entered more or less into all of them.

It must also in frankness be admitted that there have been other circumstances, less remote, which tended to confirm this view of Socialism in the minds of superficial observers. The great majority of those who called themselves Socialists, until comparatively recent years, were visionaries who believed that they

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were able to discover and set forth remedies for all the ills of afflicted humanity. All the ill-working institutions of humanity were subjected to their keenest criticism and their most ingenious speculations and experiments.

For minds of this type the marriage relation and the family offered an enticing field. Even the most conservative among us must admit that infinite tragedy and pain have been born at the matrimonial altars of modern society. A joyous union of two souls perfectly attuned to each other may be said to be the ideal marriage, but that result is not universally attained. So numerous are the failures, indeed, that we have come to speak of marriage with habitual cynicism as a lottery with more blanks than prizes. The large percentage of unhappy and unblessed marriages acts as a constant challenge to those whose dreams are of an ideal society in which there is neither sorrow nor pain. The Socialists welcomed everyone who was dissatisfied with existing social conditions, the more radical and complete the dissatisfaction the better. Conse-

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quently, every social visionary who believed that the private family, like private property, should be abolished attached himself to the Socialist cause.

It is certainly true that in the Utopian stage, before the rise of the modern, scientific Socialist movement with its political programmes inspired by the magnificent genius of Marx, many of the men and women actively engaged in the Socialist propaganda, and identified with its experiments, were honest and earnest advocates of what has come to be known as "Free Love." That they were inspired by the purest motives may be freely admitted by those who most disagree with their teachings: there is nothing unlovely in the association of Freedom and Love. Most of us will agree that Love must be free, spontaneous and unbound, however much we may cling to the monogamic idea and detest promiscuity:

Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,
Love gives itself, but is not bought.

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Even among the scientific Socialists, as might be expected, the habit of speculating upon the future of society has existed. They, too, are dreamers of dreams. It is natural that men and women who are constantly working to bring about a better condition of society, who are dominated by the conviction that a better condition must come, should dream golden dreams of that future and seek to visualize it. This is part of the religious spirit of Socialism. In like manner, Elysium, Paradise and Heaven have been visualized by Greek, Hebrew and Christian. It is but natural that the defects and failings of the marriage system should be used in their criticisms of society, in common with the defects and failings of other social institutions, and that they should attempt at least to forecast a happier and more perfect condition of affairs. How else could they be true to their faith?

Hence it happens that some of the boldest and most audacious speculations concerning the future of marriage and family have come from men and women connected with

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the Socialist movement. But these things do not justify the charge that Socialism aims at the abolition of monogamic marriage and the family life based upon it. It will not do to compile the expressions of individual Socialists, or even to point to the attempts made by such individuals to carry out their ideas, and base upon such evidence a sweeping criticism of the Socialist movement or the philosophy upon which it is founded. The only fair method of judging Socialism is to take its philosophy, the principles upon which its adherents are universally agreed, and enquire whether they involve the abolition of monogamic marriage and the family; to take the programmes of the movement and ask whether they contain anything that is incompatible with the existence of the home based upon the marriage of one man to one woman. ✓

The Socialist movement challenges this honest and candid investigation. Its appeal is from prejudice to reason, from passion to candor. Rarely indeed do those who make

this attack upon Socialism adopt this attitude. A few writers only of the multitude who have joined the discussion have had the courage and candor to take it. Some of these few have honestly admitted that Socialists do not attempt to destroy the family, that there is no conscious effort in that direction on the part of the movement. But they claim that the extension of social legislation, giving society power and responsibility in matters formerly left to the family, such as the education of children, for example, tends to destroy family life altogether.* This is fair criticism and as such merits serious consideration.

It is, of course, true that many things which were formerly the sole concern of the family are to-day cared for wholly or in part by the State. It is likewise true that in their political programmes the Socialists propose other extensions of collective responsibility and power in what was once regarded as the sacred domain of the private family. But it

* See, for instance, *The Problems and Perils of Socialism*, by J. St. Loe Strachey, The Macmillan Co., 1908.

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must be said that Socialists did not originate this development of State interference, and that many who are not Socialists at all advocate considerable extensions of the movement. It is a development of social consciousness and responsibility born out of the common experience of mankind, and if it tends to strengthen the case for Socialism may we not justly cite that fact as an evidence of the justice of our cause?

There was a time when the education of children was solely a matter of family concern. If parents could not afford to give their children educational advantages, or if they were too ignorant or careless to do so, the children went without them. They were doomed to run life's race handicapped by a lack of education and culture. The King's Treasuries were withheld from the rightful heirs. The State did not step in to protect the children from the poverty or the ignorance of the parents, and insist that there were greater rights than those of parentage — the rights of the child to a full share of all the good

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and noble in life, to drink freely from the fountains of knowledge, and of society to happy and well-dowered sons and daughters, to citizens armed with all the culture of the ages and radiating sweetness and light throughout the body politic. Those parents who believed in education for their children, and could afford it, chose their own teachers as best they might, nor did the State dream of insisting that teachers must be the possessors of definite qualifications.

For centuries there was no legislation protecting children against parental cruelty. It was supposed that the family could be left severely alone so far as the child was concerned, that the parental instinct would be a sufficient guard for the child. If parents chose to beat their children that was their own affair. But the cry of numberless victims of parental ignorance and brutality at last awoke the social conscience and the State stepped in with the doctrine that there are other rights superior to those of parents, namely, the right of the child to life and joy.

and the right of society to healthy and happy sons and daughters. Under the old régime, when a child was feeble-minded the only care it knew was that of its parents, who too often permitted it to grow up an imbecile, a menace and a burden to society. Who is there that does not remember the pathetic spectacle of the village idiot, tortured and taunted by thoughtless boys? To-day, under the inspiration of a broader social vision, the State undertakes to make the feeble-minded child a useful and self-supporting member of society instead of a care and a burden by providing it with the special care its feeble mentality demands.

Formerly, and not so many years ago, society left the child suffering from diphtheria or small-pox to the care of the family, heedless of the fact that it could not receive proper attention and that its condition imperiled the other members of the family, and, very often, numerous other families. To-day society recognizes that the family is often unable to adequately care for such little sufferers and the State assumes the responsibility, bringing

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to the task resources infinitely greater than any which the family could command. In the old dark days the deaf mute was permitted to grow up a morose, useless and dangerous person, but in these brighter days we see the State providing all such luckless little ones with a training which makes their lives brighter, happier and more useful than they could ever hope to be without its aid.

Under the old régime when everything was left to the family poisonous milk might kill or sicken the babies without protest from anyone. Children could grow up ignorant and illiterate and no voice be raised asserting their right to knowledge and education. Parents might bind heavy burdens upon the undeveloped shoulders of their children and work them to exhaustion, endangering them physically, mentally and morally without hindrance. Hundreds of such things once left solely to the family have come under social control, but he would be a rash man who would contend that we should go back to the old ways. Thus, many of the functions which formerly

belonged to parenthood have come to be regarded as belonging rather to statesmanship, but parenthood has not been destroyed thereby. As well might it be contended that because the mother of to-day does not make the homespun for her children's clothing as mothers used to do she is the less a mother. To say that the mother of the twentieth century cares less for her child because the State has insisted that she shall not nurse it in her home when it is stricken with malignant disease, and thus run the risk of infecting others, is to rest the defense of the family upon ignorance and superstition.

IX

WHAT is true of the relations existing between parents and children is equally true of many other phases of family life. Formerly the water supply of the family was its own concern. Typhoid epidemics taught us that the family could not safely be left to its own resources in this matter and public water supplies followed. Housing was once a matter which each family cared for after its own fashion. Each home was a castle, free from interference. No matter how unhygienic a home might be, or what dangers of pestilence lurked within its walls, the State did not presume to enter with its authority. Dwellings might be built according to the wildest fancy, and in violation of every law of hygiene. Fever holes or fire traps, menacing the health and lives of whole communities as well as of the families im-

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mediately concerned, could be freely built. Epidemics and conflagrations awakened a greater social consciousness and taught the need of social responsibility and care.

Does any sane person believe that family life is in any manner impaired or endangered because in our cities boards of health and tenement house commissions are doing many of the things which were formerly left to the family? Is family life assailed when a trained inspector enters the home and finds the faulty drain which kills the babies, or disinfects the room in which the fever patient has died leaving germs of the disease which, unless destroyed, may claim other victims and perhaps kill the whole family?

Modern Socialism, as an ideal, and as a programme, means equality of opportunity. It implies an equal chance for every child born into the world, so far as that condition can be attained by consecrated social effort. It implies giving all an equal chance before birth, and an equal chance to be well born, so far as that can be attained by human en-

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deavor. It means that the collective strength shall supplement individual weakness wherever possible, social wisdom supplement that of the individual. No worse attack upon the family can be imagined than to say that these things would destroy it. To make the charge is to set the family against Justice and Humanity!

To say that no Socialist ever urged that the marriage relation should be destroyed would be untrue, as untrue as the charge that this is the universal aim of Socialism. To say that no Socialists have ever sought to realize happiness by experimenting with so-called Free Love would be untrue, as untrue as the charge that all Socialists are Free Lovers. What is important for us is to remember that the movement must, like all great movements, be judged by its mass and not by its exceptional characters, and that similar individual instances may be found in almost every other movement, whether religious or political. The average Socialist of to-day no more believes in these things than

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does the average Christian, or the average Democrat or Republican.

The Socialist programme not only does not contain any such proposals, but it is directed against those factors which in present society tend to the disintegration of family life. It aims to so change economic conditions as to prevent the evil commercialization of marriage which takes place when a woman enters into a loveless marriage "for a home" as surely as when another marries for great fortune or a title and patent of nobility, rather than for love. It aims to put an end to those economic conditions which make the cry of a human child bearing the divine imprint of less importance than the cry of a machine, force the mother to leave her babe in order to become a wage-slave, servitor of the machine, and compel the child to enter into industrial competition with its father. Socialism is the only movement in the world to-day actively and aggressively struggling for these things; Socialists can claim with perfect

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candor and confidence that they are fighting those things which prostitute Love and menace the family, for conditions under which marriage and the family can flourish.

X

A FINAL word concerning Socialism in relation to Religion. A few years ago the average Socialist would dogmatically assert that Socialism and religious belief of any kind were absolutely incompatible, and it would be idle to deny that there are still many Socialists who make the assertion. There are also many earnest and intelligent Christians and other religious believers who declare Socialism to be fundamentally and irreconcilably opposed to all forms of religious faith.

Against these declarations we must set the fact that there are many thousands of devoted Christians and adherents of other religions who are earnest and active Socialists. They find no antagonism between the essentials of Christian teaching and the essentials of the

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Marxian philosophy. Tens of thousands of Christians, including Roman Catholics and Protestants of all sects and denominations, and thousands of orthodox Hebrews, call themselves Socialists, are enrolled as members of the Socialist parties of the world, and vote and work for the Socialist cause just as loyally as those who most loudly proclaim religion to be an evil thing. To the academic question as to whether Socialism and Religion can be reconciled the best answer is that they *are* so reconciled by tens of thousands in every land who find in each the complement of the other. ✓

Religion is at bottom Man's attempt to relate himself to the universe in which he finds himself, and to interpret its forces. Whence? Why? Whither? — these are the questions which Religion answers, or, rather, the answer Man makes to them becomes the framework of his religion. Fundamentally, then, Religion has to do with something that is not covered by statescraft and political economy. In every age, and under

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all kinds of governments, men have looked at the stars scattered through the upper deep and asked themselves whence they came, wondered whence and why the lightning's flash, and whence and why and whither the first movement of life in the void and blackness of the unremembered and unrecorded Beginning.

There is nothing in the fact that one man's answer is an intelligence called "God," while another's is an inevitable process called "Evolution," to prevent both from accepting the Socialist programme. The one sees in the programme the way pointed out by God, while the other sees in it the next step of Evolution. Both of them can take the step together. The Socialist parties of the world have come to recognize this and their platforms all declare religious belief or non-belief to be a private matter. So in our Socialist movement to-day the Episcopal bishop and the Catholic laborer, the Evangelical Protestant and the Jew can and do join with the Agnostic and the Atheist in loyal adherence

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to the Socialist programme and in the glorious comradeship of a great cause.

This was not always possible. In the early days of the modern Socialist movement it was undoubtedly bitterly hostile to all forms of religion. From the utterance of the greatest leaders of the movement it would be easy to compile a formidable list of quotations, all charged with bitter denunciation and scorn of religion, all insisting that religious ideas and beliefs must be uprooted from the human mind before there could be an intelligent acceptance of the Socialist ideal and programme. The reason for this is obvious if we will only pause to consider it. Modern Socialism dates from the middle of the nineteenth century, from the renaissance of science. Who is there that does not know of the great movement of rationalism which the new scientific spirit inspired all over the world? Who that does not know the tremendous conflict which the theories of Darwin for example, produced? It was a conflict into which practically every educated and intelligent person was drawn.

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On both sides of the controversy it was taken for granted that the new science and the old religion could never be harmonized, that the triumph of the one necessarily involved the destruction of the other. What epithets and curses were heaped upon the heads of Darwin and his disciples! And what contempt the followers of Darwin had for those who clung to their belief in a Divine Intelligence!

The founders of modern scientific Socialism were of the new school and their contempt for the old was youthful, enthusiastic and unbounded. They thought of Religion as a static thing, just as religious believers themselves did. They took the dogmas of Christianity at that time and held them up to intellectual scorn — a task by no means arduous. The crude hell of brimstone and the unspeakably immoral doctrine of eternal torment were assailed by men who had no idea that they were thus liberating Religion from the throttling grasp of Dogma, giving it life and freedom and not destroying it. They had no idea of the great fact that they were

splendidly religious in their irreligion. The verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, with the Mosaic account of creation, and Jonah's voyage in the whale's belly, were believed as literal facts and as such were relentlessly challenged by the cold, literal spirit of the new scientific movement. Both believers and critics thought that the destruction of these dogmas was equivalent to the destruction of Christianity itself. They did not and could not realize that so far as Religion is an effort of Man to relate himself to the universe and to interpret its forces, it must be forever changing as human knowledge increases. There was the same *spirit* behind the crude religions of primitive man as that which inspires the Christian religion in the twentieth century, but the centuries of growth and intellectual progress are reflected in the *form* of the latter.

As a result of the criticism which the new science produced the religious concept had to be changed, the new knowledge had to be applied to the interpretation of the universe,

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and those who denounced Darwin's theories because they believed them to be destructive of their religion came to embrace them. They united to their belief in a Divine Intelligence an acceptance of the facts of Evolution. Whether or not we understand the mental processes which made this possible is a matter of no concern here and now. It is enough for us that they did it; that they accepted the new theories and reconciled them to their belief in God, saying, in the language of the old hymn —

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.

The association of Socialism with dogmatic Atheism was an accidental result of the confluence of two streams of nineteenth century thought, as natural, in itself, as the fact that in Japan to-day the terms Socialism and Christianity are practically interchangeable and synonymous because of the confluence of the two main streams of modern Japanese thought. It is not at all strange, but perfectly natural,

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that the great founders of modern Socialism should have allied themselves with the scientific movement of their time and its rationalistic criticism of religion. It is not strange, but perfectly natural, that they should have looked upon religious belief as the foe of all progress, especially in view of the manner in which organized religion set itself against the new knowledge. Nor is it at all remarkable that this temper should have survived long after the facts which gave it birth and justified it have ceased to exist. A great deal of the argument of those Socialists who repeat the old contention that Socialism and Christianity are irreconcilably opposed rests upon the false assumption that Christianity is essentially based upon a denial of the facts which modern research has gathered, and upon dogmas which in reality have long since been abandoned by most Christians.

XI

BUT there is another aspect of religion to be considered. The interpretation of the universe and its forces is but the framework of religion. Around this framework are woven great ethical ideals, and we may very properly ask whether there is anything in modern Socialism at variance with the ethical ideals of Christianity, of Judaism, or of any other of the great religions of the world. And this is the most important aspect of the subject, after all: that which is vital in any religion is not its thought concerning God, but its teaching concerning human relations; not its theology but its ethics, its sociology.

Leaving aside, then, its speculations concerning the whence, why and whither of life, let us ask ourselves what were the ethical ideals of Judaism. Can they not be summed up in

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the two words, Justice and Brotherhood? The soul of Judaism is to be found in the stern, inflexible demand for justice voiced by Amos and Joel, by Micah and Hosea, Isaiah and Ezekiel, and in the visions of world-brotherhood which these prophets held up before the people. Essentially, Judaism was a great social gospel based upon the principles of Justice and Fraternity. These are not antagonized by Socialism, but on the contrary Socialism is the embodiment of those great ideals, which must always be regarded as the glory of Judaism.

So with Christianity, which was nothing more than the continuation and fuller development of Judaism. Jesus belonged to the prophetic line to which Moses and Micah, Isaiah and Ezekiel, belonged. Have you never thought that almost all his teaching of which we have any record was concerned with man in his social relations, that he was not at all concerned with creed and altogether concerned with deed? Do we not get from Christ's teaching a gospel very similar to that

of the older Hebrew prophets — a gospel in which there is denunciation of oppression and tyranny, protest against injustice, rebuke for the despoilers of widows and orphans, scorn for an unfaithful priesthood become a servitor of power and privilege? These things, together with a profound and sublime faith in the coming of universal brotherhood, made Christianity the vital force it was in the world. And again I say that there is nothing in modern Socialism that is contrary to these great principles, but they are embodied in Socialism. The torch which all the prophets from Moses to Jesus bore aloft is to-day, being borne onward by Socialist agitators.

In like manner we might go through all the religions of the world and find that their most vital forces were the great social ideals of Justice and Brotherhood which to-day find their clearest and most faithful expression in the Socialist movement. Confidently and earnestly, the Socialist can say to the followers of Moses and Jesus, Buddha and Mahomet, Zoroaster and Confucius, "The sublime social

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ideals which are common to each of you, and which are the soul of your religious faith, are inspiring millions of Socialists throughout the world, and their programmes are the means whereby the ideals are to be made real."

I ask you, then, for the reasons I have tried to indicate, to think of this Socialist movement as being something more than an effort to improve Man's material conditions, as being that indeed only as a means to the liberation of his soul. Long ages ago, in the infancy of the race, men saw the star of hope rise in the far distant sky over the hills of pain. A few, men of infinite courage and faith, followed the star, only to perish upon the lonely desert. To-day we can look back upon the desert and down upon the plain as we sing our marching songs. For we belong to an army of many millions, and have already marched far up the mountain where the star still shines over the Holy Temple which we seek.

We shall reach the Holy Temple if we

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have faith and keep marching on; our children and our children's children will worship there and fill its aisles with the sweet songs of Freedom and Fellowship. Aye, this million-voiced giant with the scarlet banner in his grasp, whose tread is shaking the world with the force of an earthquake, and whose cry is like the primeval thunderings which woke the first gray dawn, will reach the Holy Temple at length and seize the star for a sign of victory and a crown of glory:

This is the Earth-god of the latter day,
Treading with solemn joy the upward way;
A lusty god that in some crowning hour
Will hurl Gray Privilege from the place of power.
These are the inevitable steps that make
Unreason tremble and Tradition shake.
This is the World-Will climbing to its goal,
The climb of the unconquerable Soul —
Democracy whose sure insurgent stride
Jars kingdoms to their ultimate stone of pride.

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